

Performance
Rating Plan

A GUIDE TO SUPERVISORS

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

PERFORMANCE RATING PLAN

A Guide to Supervisors

GENERAL

It is the responsibility of each supervisor to see that the work in his assigned area of responsibility is done as efficiently as possible. Supervisors have long recognized that they must have a full understanding with employees as to the assigned duties and the standards of performance expected. The Congress now formally requires that employees be completely informed as to their duties and the standards of performance expected *before* their performance is rated.

The Department's Plan, which has been approved by the Civil Service Commission, spells out the way in which this will be accomplished. The purpose of this document is to explain this procedure step by step.

PROCEDURE

I. Performance Rating Forms and Job Descriptions

Within 15 days each supervisor will have received from his administrative officer:

- A. A copy of the Performance Rating Form for each employee on his staff with section 1, "General Personnel Information" filled in.
- B. A job description, where available, for each employee.

II. First Interview—Understanding Job Content and Work Requirements

Within 30 days the supervisor will arrange a personal interview with each employee under his supervision for the purpose of attaining a mutual understanding of (a) Job content (Performance Rating Form, section 2) and (b) the respective work

requirements or performance standards associated with the job. (Performance Rating Form, section 3)

Prior to this interview the supervisor should familiarize himself with the duties of each position in his area and determine the general work requirements and performance standards which he considers fair. This review will often help to avoid overlapping responsibilities and aid in the elimination of situations which develop employee grievances.

A. JOB CONTENT (*Performance Rating Form, section 2*)

The duties of the job, as recorded in the job description, should be reviewed with the employee to make certain the description reflects the work actually being performed. In the interest of an effective Position Classification Program, which understandably can have an important impact on employee morale, the supervisor and the employee's opinions of the accuracy of the job description should be recorded in section 2 of the form. If the job description is found to be inaccurate, a restatement should be prepared and forwarded to the Classification Branch for remedial action.

New employees will be informed of the content of their job descriptions at the time of reporting for duty. A sample job description and work requirements statement will be found at the end of this pamphlet.

B. JOB WORK REQUIREMENTS OR PERFORMANCE STANDARDS (*Performance Rating Form, section 3*)

With a complete and current understanding of the job description, the supervisor will arrive at an understanding with the employee on how each task in the description must be done in order to constitute satisfactory performance. The total of these constitutes the *work requirements* of the job.

Work requirements vary with the job. However the following work requirement areas have been found common to many jobs:

knowledge	volume	dependability
skill	quality	physical fitness
supervisory leadership	cooperativeness	industriousness
planning	initiative	public contact
judgment		

The supervisor will find these of assistance in arriving at a mutual understanding with the employee on the specific work requirements of the job being reviewed. He will also find helpful the sample "Job Description and Work Requirements Statement For A Secretary" which accompanies these instructions.

For example, in applying these elements to a specific case, it may be agreed that "skill" is one requirement of the job. In referring to the job description he sees that "types letters" is one of the tasks. Combining *skill* and *types letters*, he might well decide that the work requirements for this one task in the job description should be described as "types letters at a reasonable rate of speed without errors."

Work requirements for at least the important tasks should be noted in section 3 of the Performance Rating Form or on a supplemental sheet to be attached.

New employees will be informed of the work requirements of their jobs upon reporting for duty.

III. *Second Interview—Personalized Appraisal of Performance* (Performance Rating Form, section 4)

A. GENERAL

Section 4 of the Rating Form has been provided in order to record the supervisor's objective opinion of the employee's performance on each work requirement.

As a preliminary to the rating discussion it is very important that each employee be put at ease and is impressed with the advantages of a frank and constructive discussion. Sufficient time should be allowed so that the employee may fully benefit from the discussion. Securing effective job performance is the primary goal of our plan and performance rating is merely the means to this end.

The employee should be commended for a task well done before suggestions are made for improvement on those phases of work which do not "measure up." The supervisor, too, should note any suggestion or constructive criticism the employee may offer since it has a direct bearing on his performance of the job.

B. MAINTENANCE OF "ANNIVERSARY" SYSTEM OF RATING

In order to retain the "Anniversary" system of rating, the following procedure will be used for regular ratings: Three months subsequent to the foregoing personal interviews on job content and work requirements (i.e. September) sufficient time will have elapsed for the supervisor to have observed the performance of the employee and for the employee to have demonstrated his ability in the job. At that time the following employees will be given a second personal interview and the supervisor will narratively evaluate each employee's over-all performance in accordance with the Performance Rating Plan:

1. Those new employees whose first regular 6-month rating falls within the period January-to-September.
2. Those employees whose employment anniversaries fall within the period January-to-September.
3. Those employees who have served 6 months since assignment to positions having different work requirements than their former positions.

Other employees, in the order of their employment anniversaries, will then be evaluated.

C. RATING THE EMPLOYEE'S PERFORMANCE

The rating to be noted in section 4 should consist of the supervisor's frank appraisal of the employee's performance, using the standard of work requirements previously agreed upon.

(1) Ratings of "Satisfactory"

The rating should be in the supervisor's own words. As provided for in the Department's Plan, comment on the employee's performance constitutes a rating of "Satisfactory" unless either "Outstanding" or "Unsatisfactory" is checked. Personalized comment provides the most expressive means of conveying to the employee (and for the record) performance strengths and weaknesses. It is the soundest medium for obtaining a better understanding between supervisor and employee.

It should be noted that within this general category of "Satisfactory" as contemplated by the Performance Rating Act, the adjective "Excellent" or any other adjective may be used which is descriptive of performance other than "Outstanding" or "Unsatisfactory."

(2) Ratings of "Unsatisfactory"

An employee whose performance becomes so deficient in important work requirements as to become ineffective shall be assigned the rating "Unsatisfactory." Such a rating shall not be given unless preceded by a 90-day written warning which shall indicate to the employee how he has failed to satisfy work requirements. An "Unsatisfactory" rating must be supported by a statement in writing indicating wherein the performance is unsatisfactory, the facts of the prior warning, and the efforts made after the warning to help the employee bring his performance up to a satisfactory level.

(3) Ratings of "Outstanding"

An employee may be recommended for an "Outstanding" rating when *all* aspects of his performance not only exceed normal requirements but are outstanding and deserve special commendation. Such ratings must be supported by the review-

ing officer, showing *clearly, specifically, and in detail* in what manner the employee's performance is "Outstanding." The requirements for an "Outstanding" performance rating are much above the requirements for an "Excellent" efficiency rating under the former system. The justification for an "Outstanding" rating must cite specific cases demonstrating that *high quality, sustained productivity, and consistent adaptability* are far beyond normal expectations. An "Outstanding" rating must be approved by the Performance Rating Committee.

The Chairman of the Civil Service Commission has stated that one serious criticism of the former uniform system was due to the unduly large proportion of Federal employees who customarily received the "Excellent" rating. The consensus of those persons closely affiliated with the background and development of the Performance Rating Act is that its intent is to reserve the highest rating for a *comparatively few* employees whose performance in every respect deserves special recognition.

IV. *Suggestions for Improving Employee Performance* (Performance Rating Form, section 5)

Section 5 of the form entitled "Supervisor's Recommendations for Employee's Development To Make His Services More Effective" provides an opportunity for the supervisor to make suggestions that may strengthen performance weaknesses or utilize the employee to the better advantage of the Department.

V. *Evidence of Discussion With Employee*

The Performance Rating Form will be signed by the employee as evidence that it has been discussed with him. This signature does not imply agreement nor does it preclude appeal. A sample of Form DS-886 is included at end of this pamphlet.

VI. *Receipt of Official Notice of Rating*

Provision is made on the Performance Rating Form for the signature of the employee being rated. Such signature constitutes official receipt and notification of the approved rating, and the date on which the employee signs constitutes the official date of receipt of rating.

VII. *Reconsideration of Rating*

In case the employee desires to ask reconsideration of a rating after it has been approved by the reviewing officer, the supervisor will inform him of his rights in accordance with the Performance Rating Plan. A sample of Form DS-887, Performance Rating Appeal, is shown at end of this pamphlet.

Job Description and Work Requirements Secretary (Stenography) GS-5

JOB DESCRIPTION

1. *Takes and transcribes dictation.*

2. *Performs typing assignments.*

3. *Answers telephone; gives information in regard to routine matters; refers other calls to correct office or individual; arranges appointments with superior.*

WORK REQUIREMENTS

1. Takes dictation with a high degree of accuracy at normal dictating speed consistent with grade. Produces draft or final copy consistent with the work requirements for performing typing assignments (See work requirements for item 2 below). Exercises initiative and resourcefulness in contributing to the appropriate style and content of various types of communications within the limits set by superior.

2. Knows, or readily determines, and nearly always uses the proper procedures in performing various kinds of typing assignments. With few exceptions, completes typing assignments within the prescribed time limits. Rarely makes an error which necessitates retyping completely one or more pages of completed copy. Proofreads and checks completed copy, making corrections as necessary, with such accuracy that very few assignments are ever returned because of inaccuracies, clerical errors, or untidy appearance.

3. Receives and handles telephone calls promptly, effectively and in a pleasant manner. Almost always supplies satisfactorily general or readily available information in response to inquiries without disturbing other members of the staff. Refers calls to superior only when necessary, transferring other calls to the appropriate persons or offices. Maintains the appointment schedule of superior in such a manner that his available in-

- interviewing time is effectively allocated.
4. *Receives office callers.* 4. Gives prompt and courteous attention to all callers. With few exceptions, disposes finally of all routine inquiries referring only those which are necessary to superior or other members of the staff. Seldom refers a caller to the wrong person or office.
 5. *Receives, dispatches, reads, and distributes incoming and outgoing correspondence, communications, and publications.* 5. Reviews incoming mail promptly and refers it to the proper person for action. Almost always relieves superior of routine paper handling. Checks outgoing mail with such accuracy that omissions or errors rarely occur with respect to conformity with established office procedure.
 6. *Prepares correspondence in reply to inquiries for routine or readily available information.* 6. Prepares replies to routine inquiries in such a manner as almost always to conform satisfactorily to established office procedure and to contain the specified information desired.
 7. *Maintains office files, equipment, and space.* 7. Maintains office files in such a manner as to be almost always current, easily available, and readily useable by other office personnel. Maintains an adequate stock of available office equipment and materials in a readily useable condition. Keeps work space neat and businesslike in appearance.
 8. *Performs various assignments such as selecting, classifying, or assembling material for use within the office.* 8. Assists superior in substantive work by doing special assignments with limited guidance or direction. Completes these assignments on schedule and exercises initiative in securing the needed information.
 9. *Relieves superior of routine details.* 9. Exercises initiative in relieving superior of routine details in such a way as to conserve his time and improve the functioning of the office. Makes arrangements such as group meetings, appointments, and travel details.

PERFORMANCE RATING INFORMATION

RATING LEVELS

Satisfactory: An employee who performs his duties in an acceptable manner but who does not exceed the work requirements of his job to a point deserving of special commendation shall receive the rating "Satisfactory".

Unsatisfactory: An employee whose performance becomes so deficient in important work requirements so as to become ineffective shall receive the rating "Unsatisfactory". However, this rating shall not be given unless preceded by a ninety day written warning which shall indicate how the employee has failed to meet the work requirements for his job.

Outstanding: An employee shall be rated as "Outstanding" when all aspects of his performance not only exceed the work requirements of his job but are outstanding and deserve special commendation. This rating must be supported in writing by the rating supervisor, documented as to justification and be approved by the Reviewing Official and the Performance Rating Committee.

SIGNIFICANCE OF RATINGS

A performance rating of "Satisfactory" or "Outstanding" is necessary in order to receive a periodic within-grade salary advancement. An employee whose performance rating is "Unsatisfactory" is not permitted to remain in his position. He must be assigned to a position the work requirements of which he can meet or he must be separated from the service, in accordance with Civil Service Regulations.

INSPECTION OF RATINGS

The final adjective rating (not the rating form) is available for inspection in DP.

APPEALS

Two appeal agencies are provided; the Departmental Performance Rating Committee and the Board of Review.

Employees desiring to appeal an "Unsatisfactory" rating will first discuss it thoroughly with his rating supervisor and, if practicable, the Reviewing Official. If he fails to obtain an agreeable determination he may appeal in writing (Form DS-887) to the Performance Rating Committee. All appeals must be initiated within 30 days of the date an employee receives his performance rating. An appeal from the decision of the Performance Rating Committee must be made within 30 days of the date its decision is delivered to the appellant, but must be made in writing (Form DS-887) to the Board of Review.

Employees desiring to appeal a "Satisfactory" rating will first discuss it thoroughly with his rating supervisor and if practicable, the Reviewing Official. If he fails to obtain an agreeable determination he may appeal to the Performance Rating Committee or to the Board of Review, but may not do both. This appeal must be made within 30 days of the date an employee receives his rating and the decision of the appeal agency chosen will be final.

Distribution of rating form copies will be as follows:

- Original to Personnel Relations Branch and Employee's Personnel Folder.
- Yellow copy to employee.
- Blue copy to Division Administrative Officer.
- Green copy to Classification Branch.

Additional information regarding performance rating may be obtained from supervisors or the Personnel Relations Branch of the Division of Departmental Personnel.

*Your most important functions as a supervisor include: Informing your employees of the contents of their jobs; Telling them the work requirements of their job; Telling them how they are doing. By carrying out these functions, you will contribute materially to the success of the Department's operation. DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATION

FORM DS-546 1-4-51 DEPARTMENT OF STATE PERFORMANCE RATING		OFFICIAL <input type="checkbox"/> REGULAR <input type="checkbox"/> ENTRANCE <input type="checkbox"/> UNOFFICIAL
1. GENERAL PERSONNEL INFORMATION		
NAME		PERFORMANCE REVIEW PERIOD
OFFICE AND DIVISION		DATE
TITLE		GRADE
2. JOB CONTENT		
DESCRIPTION IS:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Substantially accurate <input type="checkbox"/> Accurate with minor exceptions <input type="checkbox"/> Inaccurate		
3. JOB WORK REQUIREMENTS		
4. SUPERVISOR'S NARRATIVE APPRAISAL OF OVER-ALL WORK PERFORMANCE		
THE FOREGOING APPRAISAL CONSTITUTES A GENERAL RATING OF "SATISFACTORY" UNDER THE PERFORMANCE RATING ACT OF 1950, UNLESS THE RATING OF "OUTSTANDING" OR "UNSATISFACTORY" AS DESCRIBED BELOW, IS GIVEN. <input type="checkbox"/> Outstanding* <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory* *Additional supplementary statement required. See instructions.		
5. SUPERVISOR'S RECOMMENDATION FOR EMPLOYEE'S DEVELOPMENT TO MAKE HIS SERVICES MORE EFFECTIVE.		
6. EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE (To indicate discussions were held)		DATE
7. RATING SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE (i.e., the first-line supervisor)		DATE OF RATING
8. REVIEWING OFFICIAL'S SIGNATURE		DATE OF REVIEW
9. APPROVED BY PERFORMANCE RATING COMMITTEE (Required for "OUTSTANDING" rating only)		DATE OF REVIEW
10. PERFORMANCE RATING RECEIPT (Employee's Signature)		DATE OF RECEIPT

FORM DS-887 1-4-51		DEPARTMENT OF STATE PERFORMANCE RATING APPEAL	
TO: <input type="checkbox"/> Performance Rating Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Board of Review		DATE	
APPELLANT		DATE OF PERFORMANCE RATING NOTICE TO APPELLANT	
OFFICE AND DIVISION		PERFORMANCE RATING APPEALED	
TITLE	GRADE	PERFORMANCE RATING DESIRED	
PERFORMANCE REVIEW PERIOD			
OFFICE PHONE			
REASONS FOR APPEAL			
SIGNATURE OF APPELLANT			